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Prime Minister's schedule, October 4

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
October 5, 2009

Spent the morning at his private residence.
14:56 Met Tokyo Governor Ishihara.

4) Futenma relocation to Henoko needs review: Maehara

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ASAHI (Page 2) (Abridged)
October 4, 2009

State Minister for Okinawa Seiji Maehara indicated yesterday that the government should look for an alternative site as soon as possible for the currently planned relocation of the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station in Ginowan, Okinawa Prefecture, to Henoko in the prefecture's northern coastal city of Nago since the possibility of implementing the existing plan is low. "It (Futenma relocation) has taken too much time," Maehara said. "We should reconsider a new relocation site under the Hatoyama government," he added, "and then we should go ahead with it." However, Maehara avoided saying whether the new relocation site should be within or outside Okinawa Prefecture. "The foreign minister and the defense minister are discussing this matter," he said instead.

5) Okinawa prefectural council's report to governor calls for reinvestigating environmental impact on site for Futenma replacement facility

AKAHATA (Top play) (Excerpts)
October 3, 2009

Okinawa Prefecture's Environmental Assessment Council yesterday submitted to Okinawa Governor Hirokazu Nakaima a report with recommendations on the document presented by the Defense Ministry concerning procedures for conducting the environmental impact assessment of the site in the Henoko district, Nago City, for constructing an alternative facility of the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station. The report by the council, chaired by Masamitsu Tsukayama, suggests that 412 cases in 59 items be reinvestigated in effect. The report also notes that if it is impossible to minimize the negative impact, every possibility should be looked into, including a cancellation of the project.

In response to a request by the governor this June, the council held eight meetings and conducted two local investigations.

In replying to questions from reporters, Tsukayama said:

"The document produced by the organization placing the order is extensive at 5,000 pages, but it is considered insufficient in view of scientific grounds, such as predictions and assessment. We think it is necessary to carry out another investigation in effect."

The report points out that the site for the new base is categorized as an area of sea that requires the strict preservation of the natural environment under the prefecture's environment-protection guidelines. From this point of view, the report affirms that the construction project will have a great impact on the environment," rejecting the Okinawa Defense Bureau's view that "there will be little impact."

The report with recommendations notes that (the Okinawa Defense Bureau) produced the document without fully responding to the governor's advice, as seen from the fact that no survey on dugongs

was conducted for several years. The report further says that the document "is insufficient in terms of analysis of the investigation results, predictions, and assessments" regarding the environmental impact of reclamation and the construction of such facilities as a V-shaped pair of runways.

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The report then calls for a reinvestigation in effect, emphasizing the need for "more accurate predictions and an assessment with grounds." The document from the Okinawa Defense Bureau noted that "the organization placing the order can avoid or minimize the environmental impact by taking available measures. But on this point, as well, the report notes: "In the case it is impossible to minimize the impact, the prefectural government should look into every possibility, including a cancellation of or changes in the project, including its site and scale."

6) State Minister for Okinawa Maehara underlines need for concerned ministers to reexamine Futenma relocation plan

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
October 5, 2009

State Minister for Okinawa and Northern Territories Seiji Maehara held a press conference in the city of Naha on Oct. 4. Referring to the planned relocation of the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station (in Ginowan, Okinawa Prefecture) to the coastal area of Camp Schwab (in Nago in the prefecture), Maehara said: "I have said that (the relocation plan) needs to be reexamined, and that's how I feel. If I am asked for my opinion, I will say so." Maehara thus indicated that he will refer to the need to review (the relocation plan) in future talks among the four concerned cabinet ministers, including Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada.

"I wonder if the relocation will really move forward," Maehara said to the press corps after touring Futenma Air Station on Oct. 3. "It is necessary to look into a new relocation site under the Hatoyama administration."

7) Four ministers fail to come up with new policy direction on Futenma relocation

MAINICHI (Page 25) (Full)
October 3, 2009

Shinichiro Nishida, Yasushi Sengoku

Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirofumi Hirano held a meeting with Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada, Defense Minister Toshimi Kitazawa, and Minister for Okinawa and Northern Territories Affairs Seiji Maehara at the Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei) on October 2 to discuss the plan to relocate the U.S. forces' Futenma Air Station (in Ginowan City, Okinawa) to the coastal area of Camp Schwab (in Nago City, Okinawa). However, they failed to come up with a policy direction regarding whether the plan will be reviewed to facilitate Futenma's relocation out of Okinawa in accordance with the position of the Democratic Party of Japan.

U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates is scheduled to visit Japan in late October, while President Barack Obama is also visiting in November. Hirano said at an interview with Mainichi Shimbun on October 2 that "we need to have a comprehensive view" ahead of the President's visit to Japan. However, a senior Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) official pointed out that, "They have not agreed on the timing or the schedule." The government has not even drawn up its strategy for negotiations with the U.S.

Kitazawa appeared to be anxious at the meeting on October 2, saying: "We don't have time. Let's exchange information frequently." With

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regard to his statement during his visit to Okinawa on September 26 that "relocation out of Okinawa or out of Japan would be extremely

difficult," Kitazawa explained that, "We have not come up with a policy direction."

October 13 is the deadline for Okinawa Governor Hirokazu Nakaima, who approves of the current relocation plan, to submit his opinion on the preparatory documents for environmental assessment (at the proposed Futenma relocation site). If the government does not come up with a position, the governor will be forced to make a decision while the administration's position is still unclear.

October 15 is also the deadline for revising the budget requests relating to Futenma relocation. The Liberal Democratic Party (LDP)-New Komeito administration made a "provisional allocation" of some 29 billion yen for this purpose, which is on par with the previous fiscal year. Hirano has announced in a news conference on October 2 that the Futenma Relocation Council, which was set up by the LDP-New Komeito administration as a venue for consultations between the Tokyo government and the local governments, will be reviewed. If the "provisional allocation" in the budget requests is simply carried over, the new administration's decision-making ability will be questioned. However, Okada, who is positive about reviewing the current relocation plan, said to reporters after the ministers' meeting, "We just need to make a final decision by the time (the budget formulation) is finalized (toward the end of 2009)," already indicating an intention to defer the issue.

8) Parliamentary defense secretary to visit U.S. next week

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
October 3, 2009

It has been decided that Parliamentary Defense Secretary Akihisa Nagashima will visit the United States in the middle of next week. He is expected to hold talks with Assistant Secretary of State Kurt Campbell and persons connected with the Department of Defense in Washington D.C. The purpose of the visit is to gauge the U.S. government's views on the realignment of U.S. forces in Japan and other matters ahead of a visit to Japan by Defense Secretary Robert Gates.

9) Okada: "I hope China will make a serious effort to persuade North Korea"

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
October 5, 2009

In a press conference in Yokkaichi City, Mie Prefecture, yesterday, Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada spoke of Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao's visit to North Korea: "I expect some progress will be made on the issues of North Korea's nuclear development program and its past abductions of Japanese nationals. I hope China, which has the greatest influence over North Korea, will make a serious effort to persuade the North (to address these issues)."

10) Okada expresses concern about gap in views within U.S. government over MSDF's refueling mission

YOMIURI (Page 4) (Full)
October 4, 2009

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Risa Kato, Siem Reap

Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada held informal talks with the traveling press corps in Siem Reap in Cambodia, where he was visiting, on the night of Oct. 3. Okada expressed concern about a gap in views within the U.S. government about the Democratic Party of Japan's policy on the handling of the Maritime Self-Defense Force's refueling mission in the Indian Ocean. "There is a mood in the U.S. State Department that (even if (the refueling mission) is terminated), it will accept (civilian aid to Afghanistan) if that is better than (the refueling mission)," Okada said. "But the Defense Department probably wants (Japan) to dispatch (SDF personnel) in uniform. The question is to what extent we should give consideration to such an idea."

11) Ambassador Roos visits Hiroshima, will convey experience to President Obama

MAINICHI (Page 3) (Full)
October 5, 2009

Kensuke Yaoi

U.S. Ambassador to Japan John Roos visited the Peace Memorial Park in Hiroshima City with his family on October 4 and laid a wreath at the Monument for Atomic Bomb Victims. He also visited the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, where he said he was "deeply touched." In the museum's visitors' book he wrote, "Hiroshima powerfully impresses upon visitors the destructiveness of nuclear weapons. It makes us strongly feel the importance of seeking the peace and stability of a world without nuclear weapons." According to Mayor Tadatoshi Akiba, who escorted the Ambassador during part of his visit, Roos said on the way to the Peace Memorial Park, "I will convey my experience (on October 4) to President Obama".

Roos and his son David, 17, presented origami cranes when visiting the Children's Peace Monument, which is modeled after Sadako Sasaki, who was exposed to the atomic bombing at the age of two and died of leukemia at the age of 12. He also spent about an hour at the Peace Memorial Museum. Saying he wanted to see the museum by himself, he toured the facility unaccompanied by museum officials providing explanations of exhibits. Roos is the eighth U.S. ambassador to visit the museum, but reportedly it is unusual for an ambassador be unaccompanied by a guide.

"He understood the experience of the atomic bombing victims and tried to understand their feelings along with his family" said Mayor Akiba. "It was very moving."

12) Poll: 34 PERCENT pin hopes on LDP President Tanigaki

YOMIURI (Page 2) (Full)
October 5, 2009

In a telephone-based nationwide public opinion survey conducted by the Yomiuri Shimbun on Oct. 2-4, only 34 PERCENT of respondents answered "yes" when asked if they had expectations for Liberal Democratic Party President Tanigaki, with 57 PERCENT saying "no." Respondents were also asked if they thought the LDP would be able to return to power. In response to this question, 50 PERCENT answered "yes," down from 66 PERCENT in a previous survey conducted Aug. 31-Sept. 1 right after the House of Representatives election. Public

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opinion was severe on the LDP's desire to win back the reins of government under Tanigaki.

Among LDP supporters, "yes" accounted for 58 PERCENT, with "no" reaching 36 PERCENT. The proportion of those thinking the LDP will be able to take office again among LDP supporters was 80 PERCENT right after the House of Representatives election. In the latest survey, however, the figure was 71 PERCENT.

13) Poll: Cabinet support steady at 71 PERCENT

YOMIURI (Page 1) (Abridged)
October 5, 2009

The public approval rating for the Hatoyama cabinet was 71 PERCENT in a telephone-based nationwide public opinion survey conducted by the Yomiuri Shimbun on Oct. 2-4. The disapproval rating was 21 PERCENT. The Hatoyama cabinet's support rate dropped from the 75 PERCENT rating marked in the last survey conducted right after its inauguration, but it still remains high.

In the breakdown of public support for political parties, the ruling Democratic Party of Japan stood at 47 PERCENT (51 PERCENT in the last survey). The opposition Liberal Democratic Party was at 17 PERCENT (19 PERCENT in the last survey), dropping to its lowest level on a par with the rating it received right after the 1998

House of Councillors election that ended in its crushing defeat under the Hashimoto cabinet.

In the survey, respondents were asked if they approved of the tripartite coalition framework of the DPJ, the Social Democratic Party, and the People's New Party. To this question, "no" increased to 50 PERCENT (39 PERCENT in the last survey), with "yes" at 39 PERCENT (49 PERCENT in the last survey). As seen from these figures, the proportion of negative answers topped that of affirmative ones. This appears to reflect the confusion that arose over such issues as a loan-repayment moratorium system, which Financial Services Minister Kamei, who is PNP president, has announced as a policy measure for small businesses.

Respondents were also asked about the Hatoyama cabinet's plan to end the Maritime Self-Defense Force's refueling mission in the Indian Ocean. In response to this question, affirmative answers accounted for 48 PERCENT (44 PERCENT in the last survey), with negative ones accounting for 37 PERCENT (39 PERCENT in the last survey). When asked if they approved of the Hatoyama cabinet's policy of reducing Japan's greenhouse gas emissions by 25 PERCENT, "yes" accounted for 75 PERCENT (74 PERCENT in the last survey).

14) 73 PERCENT of DPJ Lower House lawmakers cautious about SDF's overseas missions

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 1) (Abridged)
October 5, 2009

Kyodo News recently conducted a questionnaire survey of 308 Democratic Party of Japan lawmakers elected in the recent House of Representatives election. The survey was carried out in mid- and late September, and answers were received from 210 LDP lawmakers by Oct. 4. In the survey, a total of 73.3 PERCENT were cautious about sending the Self-Defense Forces for overseas missions, maintaining that Japan should go no further than to engage the SDF in United

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Nations peacekeeping operations or otherwise in humanitarian assistance activities like international emergency relief operations. Those in favor of sending the SDF to multinational forces for operations including rear support accounted for 12.4 PERCENT. Meanwhile, 1.0 PERCENT said Japan should not send the SDF overseas.

15) Pension issue settlement team to be launched before end of week: Advisers to former welfare minister Masuzoe may be tapped

SANKEI (Top play) (Excerpts)
October 5, 2009

Health, Labor and Welfare Minister Akira Nagatsuma on October 4 decided to launch a pension premium payment record issue settlement team (tentative name) consisting of experts from the private sector as early as this week. The envisaged team will study specific measures to relieve more victims whose pension accounts have become unidentifiable. It will also begin to spearhead a fact-finding survey of pension premium payments records that are difficult to identify. The Social Insurance Agency (SIA) has thus far been reluctant to launch such a survey. The team will consist of about ten members. Final coordination of views is now underway with the possibility appointing Hakodate University Guest Professor Motoshi Isomura and journalist Tatsuya Iwase as members. Both were members of the Pension Premium Records Issue Working Committee under the direct control of former health, labor and welfare minister Yoichi Masuzoe.

The Democratic Party of Japan's policy manifesto for the Lower House election stipulates fiscal 2010 and 2012 as an intensive period for dealing with the pension record issue. (The cost for the work is estimated at approximately 200 billion yen.) Nagatsuma wants to materialize the measures he has worked on by the end of fiscal 2012 with the envisaged team playing a leading role. Since Isomura and Iwase, who have been informally appointed as members, dealt with the pension record issue at the working committee for nearly two years, Nagatsuma has determined that they would be indispensable for the

swift relief of victims and the uncovering of the problems.

Nagatsuma is also calling for the cross-checking of pension records as a national project, by intensively applying personnel, goods, and money to the comparison of the original paperwork for 850 accounts with on-line premium payment records. The settlement team will also study a personnel arrangement for the cross-checking of pension premium payment records after the Social Insurance Agency is reorganized into a Japan pension agency in January next year.

16) Former finance minister Nakagawa found dead in bedroom at his residence

ASAHI (Page 1) (Excerpts)
October 5, 2009

The wife (50) of former finance minister and state minister for financial affairs Shoichi Nakagawa (56) discovered her husband lying unconscious at his residence (5-chome, Shimouma, Setagaya Ward, Tokyo) at around 8:18 a.m. on October 4, and called an ambulance. According to the police, he was found dead lying face-down on a bed in a bedroom on the second floor of his home. He had no visible external injuries. Since the cause of his death could not be determined by the administrative autopsy, the police plan to conduct

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a pathological examination. The Setagaya police view that according to the situation of his body and the room, there is a slim chance of any foul play being involved or of his committing suicide. Since a family member provided an account that he had been taking sleeping pills, the police plan to investigate the causal relationship.

He took office as finance minister and state minister for financial affairs of the Aso cabinet after contributing to the election of Taro Aso to the president of the Liberal Democratic Party. Attaching importance to stimulus measures to address the global financial crisis, Nakagawa spearheaded the cabinet's economic policy, including the fixed-amount cash handouts. He also boosted his presence by calling for more public spending at various international conferences. He appeared incoherent and slurred his speech at a news conference after the Group of Seven meeting of finance ministers and central bank governors in Rome in February this year. Facing strong criticism, he stepped down from his post. He lost the general election in August to a Democratic Party of Japan candidate. He lost his seat in the Lower House as he was also unable to secure a seat in the proportional representation system.

ROOS